

First impressions

New CES commander gives advice on arrival at Kunsan

By Lt. Col. Susan Mitchell
8th Civil Engineer Squadron
commander

I will never forget the day I found out I had been selected to command the 8th Civil Engineer Squadron here at Kunsan. The chief I was working with came running into my office with a set of Red Devil patches he pulled from one of his uniforms and told me I was going to have the greatest time of my life here, and I was going to lead the best squadron in the Air Force. From what I've seen, he's right! This was my first impression, and it was lasting:

As a relative newcomer to Kunsan, first impressions have taken on an increased meaning and impact to me. It's first impressions that can set the tone of your entire assignment, from the way you perceive the places you work and live to the way you are perceived by your co-workers and peers.

Before coming here, I had heard a lot about Kunsan and the CE Red Devils. The information I got ranged from retired NCOs who had been stationed here after the Vietnam War to the chief who had just served with the Red Devils.

The one consistent thread was the unprecedented attitude and morale of the people. And based on my first impression, I have to agree. I have never been stationed or worked anywhere that had as much pride, team spirit, and esprit-de-corps than here. Though I don't think any squadron matches the pride of the Red Devils, the team spirit permeates the entire wing. As a CE officer, I have never felt so appreciated and supported.

Fortunately, the thing I found inconsistent about the information I got, was the information about the base. Though many problems still exist, the trend here has definitely been making this a decent and enjoyable place to be.

It's clear that the NCO and officer leadership over the years have made it their goal to leave Kunsan a better place to work and live.

Even the most recent data I got from the chief is now out-of-date. He gave me a heads-up on what poor shape the base theater was in and what a huge impact it had on morale. One of the first projects I saw was the theater renovation which is now complete.

So, I am pleased once again, to be

part of a team truly focused on putting the wing's funds where they are needed most. The chief's perspectives also made me realize that first impressions are lasting impressions. One of the greatest challenges to overcome at Kunsan is the "one year" mentality that marks a lot of people's assignments here.

It amazed me, how much everyone talks about where they are going after Kunsan, even when they have just arrived. By only thinking about leaving, we breed a mentality of overlooking what we are doing here today.

We owe it to those who will follow us to leave Kunsan in better shape than we found it, as some of our predecessors have done for us. Every person on this base can impact that. From taking care of our tools, equipment, working and living areas to thinking about some of the long-term processes we can put in place for the next guy that takes our job.

Another part of first impressions is how others, the new people you will be working and living with, perceive you. A big part of that is attitude. Without a doubt there are folks assigned here today, enlisted and officer, who did not volunteer and are probably not very happy to be here. The most important thing a newcomer can do when they get here is to put any misconceptions or doubts aside. If you hang on to the frustration of being assigned to Kunsan, you are in for a long and lonely year. To quote one of the NCOs in my squadron.

"The attitude you bring into the shop your first two weeks is the attitude you are branded with the rest of your tour. If you show your peers and co-workers you are unhappy to be here, act resentful and distant, no matter how much you change after those first two weeks, you will have set a course of loneliness that could be difficult if not impossible to overcome."

So, even if you didn't volunteer to come here, look around, realize it's not that bad, and decide to make the best of it. Everyone around you is in the same boat.

The more I get to know and meet my squadron members and the rest of the Wolf Pack, the more fortunate I feel to be at Kunsan. This is truly a special place. It sparks pride and enthusiasm I've never seen and am honored to be part of an impression that is lasting.



Photo by Master Sgt. Michael Casados

Locals award security forces members

1st Lt. Andrew Sheehan (left), 8th Security Forces Squadron anti-terrorism force protection officer, and Master Sgt. Todd Wedl, 8th SFS operations bravo flight sergeant, proudly display their Habitat for Humanity appreciation awards they were presented July 13 in Kunsan City by project officials and local leaders. Both Wolf Pack warriors volunteered many off-duty hours along with several other Air Force members to assist with the construction of affordable homes for local Korean families who work but are still finding it hard to pay for housing. Habitat for Humanity is part of former President Jimmy Carter's Work Project 2001.

Commander's Hotline

The commander's hotline is your direct line of communication between me and the Wolf Pack. It's one of several means of helping to resolve concerns and to get my response to comments and questions. As a general rule, I ask you to contact the agency involved first, but if you are not satisfied, call the hotline at 782-5284, e-mail the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office or e-mail me directly.



Col. Burt Field
8th Fighter Wing commander

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Base exchange.....	782-4520
Chapel.....	782-4300
Civil engineer squadron customer service.....	782-5318
Commissary manager.....	782-4144
Computer help desk.....	782-2666
Fitness center.....	782-4026
Housing office.....	782-4088
Inspector General.....	782-4850
IDEA office.....	782-4020
Law enforcement desk.....	782-4944
Legal assistance.....	782-4283
Military equal opportunity.....	782-4055
Military pay.....	782-5574
Military personnel flight customer service.....	782-5276
Medical patient advocate.....	782-4014



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